

EDNA W. CUMMINGS

March 13, 2023

Subject: Testimony in Favor of HB 0370 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day

To the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, I support House Bill 0370.

This bill ensures that March 9 will be a Commemorative Day to honor the service of the 19 Maryland veterans who served overseas during World War II and solved the Army's mail and morale problems. They were part of a segregated unit from the Women's Army Corps, the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, also known as the Six Triple Eight. Post war, three additional members of the Six Triple Eight chose to make Maryland their home and are buried at Baltimore National Cemetery. These courageous women volunteered to serve their country in an era when their country did not always serve them.

One 6888th member, Vashti Murphy Matthews, was the daughter of Carl H. Murphy, Jr, co-publisher of the Baltimore based Afro Newspaper. The Afro's reporting of WWII captured the Six Triple Eight's history and those of other Black troops whose history would have been otherwise lost.

In 2022, the President of the United States enacted two pieces of legislation to bestow the highest civilian honors upon the Six Triple Eight, a Congressional Gold Medal and a post office renaming in Buffalo, NY after Ms. Indiana Hunt Martin. It is therefore appropriate and necessary for the State of Maryland to honor their legacy.

To ensure that the Six Triple Eight becomes a permanent part of Maryland's history and educational efforts, March 9 should be a Commemorative Day in Maryland. I therefore respectfully request a favorable vote on HB 0370.

Six Triple Eight veterans from Maryland:

Barnes, Agnes E PVT

Elzie, Vivian N 2LT

Jackson, Mary Rebecca
CPL

Jones, Laura Mae PVT

Matthews, Vashti Murphy
PFC

Moore, Annie Beulah PVT

Nailor, Mary Catherine
PVT

*Noisette, Emily Olive
PFC

Parker, Thelma Alice PVT

Philyaw, Ethel

Pollard, Hortense PFC;

Pollitt, Lucy Geraldine
PVT

Sydnor, Gloria A PVT

Tate, Catherine L PVT

Taylor, Gloria Phenryne
PVT

Whyte, Grace Margaret
PVT

Wilkins, Annie B PVT

Wilson, Eleanor Ann PVT

Young, Vivian Winifred
SGT

*Buried in Baltimore National Cemetery: Dorothy Elizabeth Mayfield Carter, Emily N. Cox,
Louise Virginia Ross, and Deloris Ruddock.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edna W. Cummings', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edna W. Cummings,
Colonel, U.S. Army Retired
Six Triple Eight Advocate and Documentary Producer